

WASHINGTON - Congressman Mark Kirk released the following statement today regarding the passage of H. Con. Res. 187, a resolution condemning BP for its plan to increase its dumping of ammonia and industrial waste into Lake Michigan at its refinery in Whiting, Ind.:

“Today’s vote shows that Congress is united in its opposition of BP’s plan to dump more ammonia and industrial waste into our drinking water. If BP refuses to stop this environmental degradation, Congress is clearly ready to step in with a legislative solution. As a company that pledges a commitment to the environment, we must hold BP accountable for this unconscionable treatment of the Midwest’s most treasured natural resource – the Great Lakes.”

The resolution passed overwhelmingly by a vote of 387 – 26. The entire Illinois and Michigan congressional delegations voted in favor of the bill. Three Indiana representatives voted against the resolution, including Reps. Souder, Pence and Buyer.

The resolution is included below.

110TH CONGRESS

1ST SESSION H. CON. RES. 187

Expressing the sense of Congress regarding the dumping of industrial waste into the Great Lakes.

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Whereas the Great Lakes are the largest surface freshwater system on the planet;

Whereas the Great Lakes account for 95 percent of the United States’ surface fresh water and about 21 percent of the world’s supply;

Whereas the Great Lakes provide drinking water for more than 30 million Americans;

Whereas, on May 18, 2004, President George W. Bush said “the Great Lakes are a national treasure”;

Whereas Congress has expressed its commitment to protecting the Great Lakes from pollutants and contaminants through the Clean Water Act and subsequent legislation;

Whereas the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Environment Canada joined together in promulgating the Great Lakes Binational Toxics Strategy to eliminate the presence of persistent toxic substances in the Great Lakes basin;

Whereas the “mixing zones” that dilute toxic chemicals discharged into the Great Lakes system have been controversial as a possible threat to humans, fish and wildlife;

Whereas the Great Lakes are plagued by pollutants such as mercury, PCBs, ammonia, DDT, alkylated lead, hexachlorobenzene, TCDD, toxaphene, and others;

Whereas high amounts of ammonia can cause algae blooms that threaten fish and water quality;

Whereas the Indiana Department of Environmental Management recently issued a permit to BP PLC to allow their facility in Whiting, IN, to release 54 percent more ammonia and 35 percent more total suspended solids into Lake Michigan each day;

Whereas the BP Whiting facility will now be allowed to dump an average of 1,584 pounds of ammonia and 4,925 pounds of total suspended solids daily into Lake Michigan;

Whereas the Great Lakes already face myriad challenges from chemicals and pollutants, including a steep increase in fish consumption warnings and record numbers of beach closures; and

Whereas Congress has a clear role in protecting the Great Lakes as an entity that spans across State and international boundaries: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That it is the sense of Congress that—

(1) Congress expresses its disapproval of the Indiana Department of Environmental Management's issuance of a permit allowing BP to increase their daily dumping of ammonia and total suspended solids into Lake Michigan;

(2) Congress urges the State of Indiana to reconsider issuance of a permit allowing BP to increase their daily dumping of ammonia and total suspended solids into Lake Michigan;

(3) Congress should take action to protect and restore the Great Lakes;

(4) the United States Environmental Protection Agency's actions in the Great Lakes basin should be consistent with the goal of preserving and restoring the Great Lakes; and

(5) the United States Environmental Protection Agency should not allow increased dumping of chemicals and pollutants into the Great Lakes.